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Public Affairs

MEDIA RELATIONS

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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OPR: PA (Lt Col Jean T. Freitas)

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AFI35-206, 29 June 1994, is supplemented as follows and provides guidance and direction for Headquarters Air Force Space Command (AFSPC), AFSPC public affairs offices, and tenant units to ensure effective prompt response to all news media. This supplement adds major command-specific guidance for media relations. It specifies actions for unit public affairs representatives and gives procedures for wings with ICBM tenant units. It does not apply to Air Force Reserve nor Air National Guard units.

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1.3.4. (Added) Public affairs offices should monitor local news sources to gauge the effects of news releases, interviews, etc. and identify emerging issues. Clippings of significant local coverage of AFSPC- or base-related issues should be forwarded to AFSPC/PAM and appropriate numbered air force (NAF).

2.7. Normally, the PAO or a designated representative approves all news releases. Attach a distribution and coordination sheet to the file copy of each news release. Follow the Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual when writing news releases.

2.8.13. (Added) Unit public affairs representatives (UPARs) at geographically separated units should record news media queries on an AF Form 39, Response to Query, and immediately pass the query to their parent wing PA office or, for direct reporting units, to HQ AFSPC/PAM. UPARs work with PAOs to develop a response and coordinate the proposed response with the unit commander. Normally, a PAO provides the approved response to the news media.

2.9.3.4. (Added) UPARs should contact the parent wing PA office or, for direct reporting units, HQ AFSPC/PAM before granting media interviews with unit personnel about mission-related or sensitive issues.

2.12.3. PAOs should maintain contact with Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act managers to ensure procedures are current and appropriate. Coordinate FOIA operating instructions with the FOIA manager annually. Establish procedures with the FOIA manager to ensure that the PAO is alerted to FOIA requests of potential news media interest or requests from media representatives.

Chapter 8 (Added)**MISCELLANEOUS**

8.1. ICBM Weapon Systems. The number of warheads an ICBM may potentially carry is releasable; however, the specific number carried at a given time is not. The presence of nuclear weapons or radioactive nuclear weapon components at any specified location must not be confirmed or denied. (For exceptions see AFI35-102 7.4.2.1, 7.4.2.2.)

START Treaty Activities. Questions about the current status of START treaty negotiations or implementations that go beyond previously released material should be referred to the On Site Inspection Agency (OSIA) public affairs office.

8.2.1. The host PAO should notify AFSPC/PAM when official OSIA mock inspections include ICBM resources. Current DOD guidance prohibits media coverage of official mock inspections.

8.2.2. The host PAO must notify AFSPC/PAM as soon as the base receives notification of an inspection that may involve ICBM resources. Any media activity involving AFSPC people or resources must be approved by the local wing/group commander and will comply with OSIA, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and DOD guidance.

8.4. Helicopters. AFSPC wing/group commanders must approve requests for local media flights on AFSPC helicopters. Requests for national/international media orientation flights, must be forwarded to AFSPC/PA for approval five days prior to flight. AFSPC/PAM will coordinate with NAF/PA and SAF/PAM. (See AFI 11-401 1.9.3.7; DoD 4515.13R)

8.5. Public Affairs Responsibilities of Associate Units and Host Wings . Host wing PAOs must work issues concerning AFSPC resources or operations that could involve national- and international-level media immediately and directly with AFSPC/PAM and the associate unit commander. AFSPC/PAM will coordinate as required with NAF/PA, the host MAJCOM/PA, USSTRATCOM/PA, USSPACECOM and SAF/PAM.

8.5.1. Routine queries about day-to-day AFSPC operations may be handled by the host wing. Wing PAOs must notify the associate unit commander and the NAF PAO about other-than-routine media interest.

8.5.2. Media visits (with or without photography) to ICBM facilities (launch facilities and missile alert facilities) must be approved by the ICBM wing/group commander. Each request will be handled on a case-by-case basis, but media visits to launch facilities or missile alert facilities will not be offered or encouraged by the host wing PAO without prior coordination with the missile group. The host wing PAO should notify the 20 AF/PA of media visits to ICBM facilities.

Chapter 9 (Added)

MEDIA RELATIONS FOR SPACE LAUNCHES

9.1. Launch-base Responsibilities. Launch-base public affairs offices will generate a standardized public affairs plan for classified and unclassified launches adapted for each type of launch. The plans will address media credentialing and badging procedures, escort procedures, viewing sites, remote camera placement, media conferences, and procedures to accommodate civic leaders and the public.

9.2. Standardized Questions and Answers. Questions and answers about each type of launch vehicle will be developed by the launch-base public affairs office and made available to supporting public affairs offices for every mission. Questions and answers should be localized as necessary and address the vehicle, payload, launch schedule, mission operations, program issues and range activities including range safety weather, radars, launch facilities/support, etc. Questions and answers should be reviewed and updated annually by 14th AF/PA, SMC/PA, AFMC/PA, AFSPC/PA and SAF/PA as appropriate. Unusual occurrences or major program events will require more frequent coordination.

9.3. Pre-Launch Conference. Pre-launch media conferences will not be routinely scheduled. A conference may be held to recognize a significant milestone if the Mission Director concurs. If a pre-launch conference occurs, the launch-base public affairs office will be responsible for providing a suitable on-base facility and logistical support.

9.4. Pre-Launch Response to Query. Primary responsibility for responding to queries about the launch vehicle or mission rests with the launch-base public affairs office.

9.4.1. Information provided in response to query concerning unclassified missions should be consistent with range schedules and other published information. PAOs should emphasize that many factors influence actual launch dates and times and that all information is subject to change.

9.4.2. For any mission with a classified payload or booster, pre-launch responses are limited to quarterly launch schedules until the Notice to Airmen and Mariners (NOTAM) is published or an exception is authorized under applicable SCGs and approved by the Mission Director. Following the release of the first NOTAM but prior to the Launch Readiness Review (normally about 48 hours before launch), response to queries will be limited to: The Air Force plans to launch a (vehicle) on (date) between (times specified in NOTAM). The Air Force has an opportunity to launch during this period and a NOTAM is required to take advantage of that opportunity. Although we plan to launch during this period, a number of activities in the launch flow must be completed before we are able to confirm the specific launch date and period. When those activities are completed, usually about two days prior to the launch, you will be notified. All information about the payload is classified.

9.5. Launch Date/Time Announcements. Launch date/time announcements will vary according to the classification of the launch.

9.5.1. Actual announcement through a media advisory or news release of an unclassified mission should not occur until the launch date and time is reasonably certain.

9.5.2. After the NOTAMs have been released for a classified launch, the Launch Readiness Review is complete, and the Mission Director approves, the launch-base public affairs office may announce a planned launch and confirm specific date and launch “period.” (A launch “period” is a span of time somewhat greater than but proportionate to the length of the launch window. It begins before the opening of

the window and ends after the closing of the launch window. The actual launch window will not be released.)

9.5.3. In the event of a delay in a classified launch, the procedure starts over again with the new launch date and period classified until the NOTAMs have been released. Released information concerning the delay must be coordinated through the appropriate agencies and approved by the Mission Director.

9.6. Remote Cameras. Remote camera placement is not authorized for classified missions. For unclassified missions, media may be provided an opportunity to set up remote cameras at approved sites on the day before or the day of the launch. Launch-base public affairs will make media notifications; arrange for times, access and badging; alert appropriate base agencies that media will be in the area; and escort media during remote camera set up and retrieval operations.

9.7. News Releases. The launch-base public affairs office will prepare a pre-launch news advisory and a successful launch news release. In addition, they will prepare standard, fill-in-the-blank contingency news releases and coordinate.

9.8. Media Kits. The launch-base public affairs office will assemble media kits with inputs from the vehicle contractor, and other organizations as appropriate. Kits will be distributed to the media by the launch-base public affairs office and made available to other organizations as appropriate before the launch occurs.

9.9. Commentary/TV Coverage. Live commentary will be provided when approved by the Mission Director. Commentary will use existing communications lines. Live satellite TV coverage from immediate pre-launch through post-launch media availability is authorized, if approved by the Mission Director and if possible within existing resources. TV coverage may be provided by the prime contractor if they purchase the service. The launch-base public affairs office is responsible for commentary and for coordinating contractor provided TV coverage. Any discussions with NASA for use of NASA Select will be coordinated with SAF/PA.

9.10. Launch Viewing and Media Accreditation. Launch-base public affairs offices will ensure media are legitimate with verified credentials and “badged” for the launch.

9.10.1. Launch viewing from the on-scene media site will be limited to legitimate internal and external media. Formal identification of media representatives and verification of their press credentials will be completed in advance by the launch public affairs office which will then issue “Escort Required” badges to media representatives normally covering launches.

9.10.2. Media representatives not regularly covering space launches, i.e., not previously “badged,” will be given reporting and credentialing instructions in the pre-launch news advisory or in response to specific query.

9.10.3. Media representatives will be instructed to report to a pre-designated location approximately 90 minutes prior to the opening of the launch period for processing. From there, they will be escorted by the launch-base public affairs and prime contractor public relations officials to the press site. Media will remain under escort at all times. Transportation will be by caravan.

9.10.4. Media coverage of the launch will be from existing, approved launch viewing sites based on which launch complex is in use and subject to approval by the Mission Director. On-scene viewing will not be provided for non-accredited media.

9.11. Photography/Video. The launch-base public affairs office is responsible for providing video and still photography of the launch to both internal and external media. Exception is made in the event of a failed launch where the release of video/still photography may impact an accident investigation. Coordination with the Mission Director and local safety officials is mandatory prior to release in the event of a failure.

9.12. Post-Launch Media Availability. A post-launch media availability will not routinely occur but may be held, with Mission Director's approval, for milestone occurrences, in the event of a launch contingency, or when interest and circumstances dictate. The availability will normally be held at an approved, on-base conference site. The launch-base public affairs office is responsible for arranging details.

9.13. Points of Contact. A list of key public affairs or corporate public relations officials and their telephone numbers will be prepared and distributed as part of the pre-launch news advisory.

9.14. After Action Reports. Post-launch reports should be faxed to the MAJCOM and headquarters public affairs officers in most cases or phoned in for Titan IV classified launches in order to keep the MAJCOM and headquarters informed about launches. The reports should include but not be limited to information about the success of the launch, media interest, personal assessment of the overall success of the event, etc.

9.14.1. Immediately following a Titan IV or any other high-profile launch, the launch-base public affairs office will notify 14th AF/PA, SMC/PA, AFSPC/PA and SAF/PA by telephone. All launch anomalies will also be reported immediately. Routine, successful launch notifications can be provided as telefaxed news releases.

9.14.2. If a post-launch conference is conducted, the launch-base public affairs office should notify 14th AF/PA, SMC/PA, AFSPC/PA and SAF/PA, as appropriate, of any problems encountered and/or actions to be taken as a result of the session.

9.15. Update and Coordination Instructions. The prepared information for launches should be kept current.

9.15.1. Question and answer packages will be reviewed and updated by the launch-base public affairs office prior to each launch.

9.15.2. Questions and answers concerning program development or status will be coordinated with the appropriate program office.

9.15.3. Questions and answers concerning policy or launch security will be coordinated with 14AF/PA, AFSPC/PA and SAF/PA.

9.15.4. Questions and answers about launch vehicles supporting classified payloads must also be coordinated with the appropriate Mission Director.

9.15.5. Launch-base public affairs offices will review and update each system-specific public affairs plan at least annually or more often if warranted by unusual circumstances or significant events.

DAVID D. GARNER, Col, USAF
Director of Public Affairs